First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework

A Progress Report

November 2004

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POLICY STATEMENT

Alberta Learning commits to proactive collaboration and consultation with First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents and communities, and other key education, government, and community stakeholders to implement learner-focused strategies that will:

- *Increase and strengthen knowledge and understanding among all Albertans of First Nations, Métis and Inuit governance, history, treaty and Aboriginal rights, lands, cultures, and languages.*

- *Provide First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners with access to culturally relevant learning opportunities and quality support services.*

- *Develop ministry capacity to address First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner needs effectively.*

- *Report progress on the achievement of expected long-term outcomes for First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, and other Albertans.*

FNMI Education Policy Framework
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INTRODUCTION

The Government of Alberta is committed to enhancing the well-being and educational opportunities of Aboriginal peoples in the province. As part of Ministry commitment to the Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Initiative (API), a key priority is to improve First Nations, Inuit and Métis learner success.

In the spring of 1999, a review of the 1987 Native Education Policy was initiated. An extensive public consultation process involving over 5,000 participants laid the foundation for the development of the *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education (FNMI) Policy Framework*.

During the consultations, a Native Education Policy Review (NEPR) Advisory Committee was established consisting of First Nations and Métis authorities, other key education stakeholders and government.

In 2002, the Government of Alberta released the *First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Education Policy Framework*. Since the development of the Framework, work has been guided by the five priority strategies/actions recommended by the NEPR Advisory Committee:

Strategy 1.5 Increase First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner access to post-secondary and other adult education and training opportunities and support services.

Strategy 2.1 Increase the attendance, retention and graduation rates of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students attending provincial schools.

Strategy 2.2 Increase the number of First Nations, Métis and Inuit teachers and school/institution personnel.

Strategy 2.4 Facilitate the continuous development and delivery of First Nations, Métis and Inuit courses and professional development opportunities for aspiring and existing administrators, teachers/instructors and school/institution personnel.

Strategy 4.2 Build working relationships that will contribute to quality learning opportunities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners.

The purpose of this report is to communicate to Albertans the current work of government toward improving Aboriginal learner success. It provides an update on the progress made since the release of the *FNMI Education Policy Framework*.

On the following pages, current actions are referenced against the goals and strategies recommended in the *FNMI Education Policy Framework*. The strategies that correspond with the five priority actions recommended by the NEPR Advisory committee are identified with an asterisk.

Improving Aboriginal learner success is a shared responsibility. It requires continued collaboration among Aboriginal learners and parents, Aboriginal communities, various education stakeholders and government to implement strategies to enhance educational opportunities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners in the province.

GOAL 1

High quality learning opportunities that are responsive, flexible, accessible, and affordable to the learner

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
Aboriginal Language Courses • Four new provincial Cree Language and Culture courses have been developed. A Cree Language and Culture Twelve Year Program of Studies has been developed and authorized for use in Alberta schools. New draft provincial Cree Language and Culture Nine Year, Six Year, and Three Year Programs of Study have also been developed and are being field tested. Teaching and learning resources to support these new programs have been identified and authorized. • Alberta Education supported the development of a new Blackfoot Language and Culture program of studies by the Kainai Board. • Junior High learning resources for both Blackfoot and Plains Cree have been developed in cooperation with First Nation Education Authorities (i.e., the Kainai Board from Blood reserve and Treaty 6 Tribal Ventures). In addition, Alberta Education and the Alexis Board of Education are developing Stoney/Nakoda language courses. (Strategy 1.13)	Strategy 1.1: Increase the quantity and quality of First Nations, Métis and Inuit curriculum, language, learning and teaching resources.
Aboriginal Studies 10, 20, 30 • The first provincial program in Aboriginal Studies has been developed in partnership with elders, educators, and Alberta Education staff. *Aboriginal Perspectives - Aboriginal Studies 10* which was published in August 2004, is the first of the three student basic resources now available to teachers. Final published versions of Aboriginal Studies 20 and 30 are scheduled to be available to teachers by March 2005. The course content for Aboriginal Studies 10-20-30 deals with First Nations, Métis and Inuit history and contemporary issues in Alberta from a diverse Aboriginal perspective. The development of three teacher's resource manuals to support the three textbooks is underway.	
Social Studies K-12 Curriculum • First Nations, Metis and Inuit governance, history, treaty and Aboriginal rights, lands, cultures and language perspectives are being infused into the revised Social Studies Program. (Strategies 1.11 & 1.12)	

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
Infusion of Aboriginal Content into the K-12 Curriculum • Alberta Education is infusing Aboriginal perspectives into all subject areas including physical education, health, CALM, mathematics, science and English language arts. (Strategy 1.12)	
Industry Training Program • Alberta Advanced Education is collaborating with stakeholders to develop Aboriginal initiatives leading to increased employment opportunities. For example, SAIT has partnered with Maskwachees Cultural College to deliver a Petroleum Industry Training program. (Strategy 1.51)	* Strategy 1.5: Increase First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner access to post-secondary and other adult education and training opportunities and support services.
Apprenticeship Initiatives • Alberta Advanced Education, in collaboration with the Northland School Division and the Métis Settlements General Council, established a Cook apprenticeship training program for Aboriginal people at Portage College. Apprentices have completed both first and second year of their apprenticeship program. Their apprenticeship exam results for first year (2003/04) were the highest of all apprenticeship Cook classes in Alberta. Second year exam results were strong, and the third and final year of their apprenticeship program will be delivered at Portage College in July/August, 2005.	* Strategy 1.5: Increase First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner access to post-secondary and other adult education and training opportunities and support services.
• Apprenticeship technical training classes for the first and second year of the Painter Decorator trade are currently underway in Siksika. The delivery of a third year Carpenter class is also underway in Grouard, delivered by Northern Lakes College.	
• Alberta Advanced Education continues to provide support to the Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project (AAAP), a joint venture between industry and Aboriginal representatives and the federal government designed to increase Aboriginal participation and successful completion of Alberta apprenticeship programs. The AAAP has over 100 registered apprentices participating in over 23 different trades. The Project has expanded and is now operational in Calgary and Lethbridge. The Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) provides opportunities for high school youth to begin their apprenticeship program in Grade 10. The youth are paid by their employer during their on-the-job training, and earn high school credits for this training. Once the youth have graduated from high school, they are eligible to enter the first year of their apprenticeship technical training program, and often realize full time employment with the training employer.	
• Fifty $1,000 scholarships are available to students who are completing RAP and who will be entering the regular apprenticeship program. These are offered to all students participating in the RAP. In addition, there are 165 annual	

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
scholarships available for apprentices. Of these, there are scholarships specifically identified for Aboriginal apprentices. Eight scholarships of $1000 were provided to Aboriginal apprentices for 2004/05. • The Youth Apprenticeship Project (YAP) is a pilot project that helps students, starting in Grade 7 and continuing through to Grade 12, explore career options through integrated learning activities that include linking academic and applied learning. YAP students will receive hands-on learning opportunities in school, through worksite visits/placements and by viewing demonstrations of key workplace skills by certified trades people and other professionals. As of September 2004, the YAP is underway in five schools in the communities of High Prairie, Lac La Biche and Wabasca/Desmarais, with more than 240 Grade 7 students enrolled.The goal is to increase students' knowledge of the various career options and provide them the skills to make informed career choices.The first year evaluation of the Youth Apprenticeship Project will be conducted in July 2005. • Government continues to develop informational and promotional materials for Aboriginal audiences to increase their awareness and assist them to make choices about career opportunities in the trades. In 2003-04, two *Step Into The Trades* guides outlining apprenticeship and the trades were developed – one for Aboriginal students in junior and senior high school and one for counsellors and educators. Copies of the *Step Into The Trades* guide for counsellors and educators continue to be distributed to schools and counselling centres. Two Aboriginal Youth Ambassadors, one in the North Region and one in the South Region, are providing school presentations using the student guide as a tool to promote the trades as a viable career option. To date, the Aboriginal Youth Ambassadors have provided over 85 presentations to more than 2,000 students. More recently, information sheets that provide parents with a clear understanding of career opportunities in the trades have been distributed to students in K – 6. Colouring/Activity books and playing cards with depictions of the trades are being developed for early elementary grades. A comic book depicting the journey of Aboriginal students as they determine their career direction and begin their apprenticeship programs is being developed for junior high school students. • Alberta Advanced Education, in collaboration with other stakeholders, has prepared a proposal to research, design and develop an Essential Skills program to address the needs of Aboriginal people who would like to participate in apprenticeship programs, but lack the necessary workplace skills. This initiative, Apprenticeship Preparation for Aboriginal People, is to include course content such as workplace expectations, fundamental trade skills, Math and English, and other essential skills necessary to gain and retain employment.	* Strategy 1.5: Increase First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner access to post-secondary and other adult education and training opportunities and support services.

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
Research with Aboriginal organizations, training institutions, employers, employer associations, and others is underway.	

** Priority as recommended by the NEPR Advisory Committee.*

GOAL 2

Excellence in learner achievement

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
Alberta Education has added five Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) to implement the FNMI Education Policy Framework • Three FTEs have been added in the areas of Special Programs, Professional Development and Literacy. • One FTE has been added in Aboriginal Studies and Social Studies. • One FTE has been added to infuse Aboriginal Curriculum into all subject areas. **Amiskwaciy Academy** • Amiskwaciy Academy is a partnership between Alberta Education and the Edmonton Public School Board. Using the Alberta Program of Studies as a base, the Academy enriches the curriculum by offering options courses that reflect Aboriginal traditions and values. (Strategy 2.1) **Rainbow Spirit Project** • Rainbow Spirit Project is a joint venture between Edmonton Catholic Schools and Alberta Education. It is designed to identify and implement a series of "Best Practises" into six district schools to meet the needs of integrated Aboriginal students. (Strategy 2.1) **First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Programs** • Since the late 1980s, Alberta Education has provided funding for school jurisdiction-initiated Aboriginal education programs. • In 2001-2002 there were 44 projects focused on improving student achievement, high school completion, parental involvement and cultural awareness. These projects were concluded in 2003-2004 with the introduction of the Renewed Funding Framework, which allocates funding for each Aboriginal student in the provincial education system (for more information on the Renewed Funding Framework see pg. 15)	* Strategy 2.1: Increase the attendance, retention and graduation rates of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students attending provincial schools.

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) Projects • Five AISI projects are exclusively aimed at providing direct assistance for Aboriginal students. Strategies are designed to increase school attendance, improve performance on Provincial Achievement Tests, provide cultural awareness and professional development for staff, provide student support and promote parental involvement.	* Strategy 2.1: Increase the attendance, retention and graduation rates of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students attending provincial schools.
Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (University of Alberta) • Operating in conjunction with Blue Quills College and Northern Lakes College, the University of Alberta is supporting three cohorts of future Aboriginal teachers through Access Fund Grants. The first cohort began in January 2002 in cooperation with Blue Quills College. The second cohort at Slave Lake, in cooperation with Northern Lakes College, began in September 2002. The third cohort, regionally based, began in September 2003.	* Strategy 2.2: Increase the number of First Nations, Métis and Inuit teachers and school/institution personnel.
Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (University of Lethbridge) • The Niitsotapi Program, which will receive approximately $1.2 million over three years, was developed in collaboration with Red Crow Community College. • The first phase of the initiative involved the admission of a one-time additional cohort of 12 Aboriginal students across all teaching majors to the regular, on-campus program in Fall 2003. This phase of the program will also incorporate additional cultural support including consultants from the Aboriginal community. • The second phase of the initiative involved the admission of a one-time additional cohort of 24 First Nations students to a specialized, culturally-sensitive Blackfoot teacher education program in 2004.	

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
FNMI School-Community Learning Environment Project • In partnership and collaboration with the six Regional Consortia, Alberta Education is developing a training manual to support the delivery of in-service sessions to assist school staff, central office personnel, school councils and school boards to develop a better understanding, respect, and appreciation of Aboriginal cultures and improve the school-community learning environment for Aboriginal learners. • Alberta Education has dedicated $1.5 million to support 16 school jurisdictions with significant Aboriginal student populations to develop and implement projects that target increased student achievement, enhanced parental/community engagement, valuing of Aboriginal cultures and history, and that includes professional development for staff in order to identify effective practices that can be shared provincially.	* Strategy 2.4: Facilitate the continuous development and delivery of First Nations, Métis and Inuit courses and professional development opportunities for aspiring and existing administrators, teachers/instructors and school/institution personnel.
Aboriginal Teacher Education Instructional Modules • In partnership with the Universities of Lethbridge, Calgary, and Alberta, Alberta Advanced Education will develop and deliver instructional modules for all graduates of teacher education programs that address the needs of Aboriginal learners.	
Memorandum of Agreement (January 2004) • Under the Memorandum of Agreement, each of the teacher preparation institutions are required to periodically report their progress in addressing "teacher education about Aboriginal culture and appreciation of First Nations Métis and Inuit issues."	
Performance Measures • A plan to collect Aboriginal student information, and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of apprenticeship programming for Aboriginal students, is underway. (Strategy 2.51) • The Aboriginal Learner Data Collection Initiative (ALDCI) was implemented in September 2004. For more information on the ALDCI see page 14. (Strategy 2.52)	Strategy 2.5: Improve mechanisms to measure First Nation, Métis and Inuit learner success.

GOAL 3

Learners are well-prepared for participation in post-secondary studies and the labour market

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
Literacy Project • The Further Education Society trained seven Aboriginal volunteers to deliver facilitator training, and trained 22 Aboriginal facilitators to facilitate Aboriginal Literacy and Parenting Skills (A-LAPS) programs. • The Centre for Family Literacy provided training and Aboriginal-culturally appropriate family literacy learning resources to 150 home visitors. • A cross-ministry steering committee has been formed and a consultant contracted to develop an Aboriginal component to the Parent-Child Literacy Strategy. Implementation of four Aboriginal family literacy programs is expected to begin in the winter of 2004.	Strategy 3.1: Increase the literacy opportunities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and adults.
Alberta North • Alberta-North is a partnership of six northern post-secondary institutions—Athabasca University, Fairview College, Grande Prairie Regional College, Keyano College, Northern Lakes College and Portage College—that aims to increase and improve the access to educational opportunities for adult learners in northern Alberta. The network of 49 Community Access Points (CAP sites) provides educational opportunities for over 1,700 registrants per year in small and isolated communities across Northern Alberta. A significant number of students are Aboriginal.	Strategy 3.2: Support arrangements to increase First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner enrolment in post-secondary programs of study.
On-line Courses in Aboriginal Addictions Services • Keyano College is developing on-line courses in Aboriginal Addictions Services, as well as in Aboriginal Child and Family Services.	
Northern Lakes College Feasibility Study for On-line Diagnostics and Needs Assessment for Academic Upgrading Learners • Northern Lakes College has received $45,000 of Access funding to produce a report documenting the feasibility of an on-line diagnostics and needs assessment system, alternative implementation strategies, anticipated benefits, associated costs, and timelines. The study is scheduled for completion in 2005.	

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
University of Lethbridge FNMI Transition Study • The University of Lethbridge has received $120,000 in Access funding to undertake a First Nations Transition Study, which includes developing and piloting a transition program for First Nations students, developing and delivering a professional development program for all faculty, and conducting evaluation research at the end of the two pilot programs. The study is scheduled for completion in 2005. **Northern Lakes College: Teacher Assistant Training** • A proposal for $150,000 of Access funding was initiated in response to requests for teacher assistant training by Northland School Division, First Nation school authorities, and the college Community Education Committees. The employers and clients strongly indicated that the program must focus on assisting Aboriginal children with special needs. One cohort of 22 began in September 2003 and a second cohort of 22 began in September 2004.	Strategy 3.2: Support arrangements to increase First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner enrolment in post-secondary programs of study.
Apprenticeship Initiatives • For examples of Apprenticeship activities, see page 6. **Aboriginal Policing Certificate Program** • Advanced Education along with Alberta Solicitor General and the RCMP participated in the development of two Aboriginal policing certificate programs. The first, Aboriginal Policing and Security, is a joint initiative between NorQuest College and Northern Lakes College. The second, Aboriginal Police Studies, is delivered by Grant MacEwan College. Graduates will obtain the skills and prerequisites required to enter cadet training with municipal police services or the RCMP. **Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program** • Keyano College recently received government approval for delivery of an Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program that is designed to allow individuals working in Aboriginal business settings to acquire business skills and knowledge without having to leave their jobs or relocate.	Strategy 3.3: Increase the linkages between education and employment for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learners.

GOAL 4

Effective Working Relationships

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
Building Relationships • Government is building on the relationships established during the Native Education Policy Review, and continues to dialogue with Aboriginal communities and education stakeholders. The Advisory Committee that helped to guide the NEPR will have a continued role through the implementation of the *FNMI Education Policy Framework.* (Strategy 4.22)	* Strategy 4.2: Build working relations that will contribute to quality learning opportunities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners.
Canada/Alberta/Aboriginal Partnership Forum • The Canada/Alberta/Aboriginal Partnership Forum was established in 2000 to facilitate federal-provincial discussion on Aboriginal issues and to develop more effective partnerships with the Aboriginal community, industry and other stakeholders. (Strategy 4.32) • A sub-committee on education was established in October 2002 to identify priority areas for potential collaboration.	Strategy 4.3: Identify and reduce barriers to First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner success.
Pilot Options for First Nations Education • The Government of Alberta is committed to enhancing the well-being and educational opportunities of Aboriginal peoples in the province. While remaining sensitive to the jurisdictional complexities, Alberta has indicated a willingness to work with First Nations and the federal government on teacher recruitment and retention, early childhood development, school systems, and parental involvement.	

GOAL 5

Highly Responsive and Responsible Ministry

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
Aboriginal Learner Data Collection Initiative • *The FNMI Education Policy Framework* identified the need to create mechanisms through consultative processes to measure and improve First Nation, Métis and Inuit learner success. In order to improve the assessment of educational attainment of Aboriginal learners, Alberta Education has undertaken an Aboriginal Learner Data Collection Initiative. (See also Strategy 2.51) As of September 2004, a voluntary Aboriginal ancestry question has been included on registration forms in the K-12 and post-secondary systems. This will allow Alberta Education to collect and compile information for the measurement of system effectiveness and programs/services. **Jurisdiction Three-Year Education Plans and Annual Education Results Reports (AERR)** • Review of all jurisdictions' Three-Year Education Plans and Annual Education Results Reports includes exploration of strategies implemented to increase the achievement and high school completion rates for FNMI students. **Renewed Funding Framework** • Alberta Education has recently revised its funding framework to account for cost factors that vary across jurisdictions and are beyond the control of school boards. The Renewed Funding Framework distributes funding based on the following three categories: (1) base funding, (2) differential cost funding and, (3) provincial priority funding. • Alberta Education has announced that the needs of Aboriginal students will be addressed by the *differential cost funding* formulas. Jurisdictions will receive additional funds ($1,020) for each Aboriginal student identified in the school district/division to assist boards in providing programs for Aboriginal students.	Strategy 5.1: Enhance performance measurement, performance assessment and results reporting.

CONCLUSION

A commitment to maximizing First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner success

The previous sections illustrate Alberta Education and Alberta Advanced Education work toward enhancing the well-being and educational opportunities of Aboriginal peoples in the province. The Ministries are committed to ensuring that the life-long learning aspirations and potential of First Nations, Métis or Inuit individuals and communities are realized through a responsive and accountable education system. Government will be exploring new strategies for the next planning cycle to further progress toward the goals of the *FNMI Education Policy Framework*.

APPENDIX – MEASURING PROGRESS

The Government of Alberta recognizes the importance of performance measures and reports annually on Goal 5* of the 2004-2007 Government of Alberta Business Plan. Results are reported through the Aboriginal Policy cross-ministry initiative and can be found in the Government of Alberta annual report, *Measuring Up,* located on the Government of Alberta web site.

Educational attainment targets for 2004/05 included the following:

Target 5: Increase percentage of Aboriginal Albertans aged 25-34 completing high school and post-secondary programs (establish baseline data)

Results: This target represents the first year of a three-year initiative by Alberta Education and Alberta Advanced Education to establish new, provincial-level baseline data on educational attainment for Aboriginal people living off-reserve. The data is obtained through the Aboriginal-specific Labour Force Survey.

Results from the first year of data collection indicate that 74.9% of Aboriginal Albertans aged 25-34 living off-reserve have completed high school and 41.5% have completed post-secondary education. (Comparable completion rates for non-Aboriginal Albertans aged 25-34 are 89% completing high school and 57% completing post-secondary education.

Target 6: Provide 20 additional teacher training spaces for Aboriginal learners.

Results: Initiatives to increase the number of Aboriginal teachers are an important element in improving Aboriginal participation in and support for the education system. During 2004-05, Alberta Advanced Education worked with post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities to provide 24 additional teacher training spaces for Aboriginal learners. All 24 teacher training spaces in the Blackfoot teacher education program at Red Crow College were fully subscribed for the 2004-05 school year. In addition, 12 Aboriginal students enrolled last year in the Bachelor of Education program through the University of Lethbridge continued their education in 2004-05.

**Goal 5: Aboriginal Communities and People in Alberta will have improved social and economic circumstances*